

**H.R. 266 – The National Invasive Species Council Act**  
**Rep. Vernon Ehlers**

Thousands of non-native species have been either intentionally or unintentionally introduced into United States, multiplying in ecosystems where they don't have any competition and causing tremendous economic and environmental harm. With over 20 different federal agencies involved in prevention, eradication, control, monitoring, research and outreach efforts to deal with the threat of invasive species, we must ensure that these federal efforts are coordinated and effective.

In 1999, an Executive Order (#13112) established the Invasive Species Council and gave the Council responsibility for coordinating all invasive species activities across the federal government.

**While the Council has had some success, its authority to coordinate the actions of federal agencies has been limited.** The General Accounting Office (GAO) recently recognized this problem, stating that agencies did not incorporate the components of the National Management Plan into their annual performance plans. In addition, GAO recommended that the Council study whether or not a lack of legislative authority has hampered its mission. Key agencies of the Council have already recognized this lack of authority as problematic and have supported codification of the Council in testimony before a November 2002 joint hearing of the House Resources and House Science Committees on aquatic invasive species.

**The National Invasive Species Council Act codifies the Executive Order and addresses several key issues raised by the GAO.**

**Major provisions of the legislation:**

- ✓ Maintains the Executive Order's policy that federal agencies should not undertake actions that may lead to spread or introduction of invasive species.
- ✓ Requires the Council for Environmental Quality, in conjunction with the Council, to issue guidelines for Federal agencies to help them consider the consequences of any proposed action.
- ✓ Sets forth the clear duties of the Council, including:
  - Updating the existing National Management Plan to better coordinate and organize all federal programs dealing with invasive species;
  - Coordinating federal agencies' activities with state and local programs;
  - Ensuring that information regarding invasive species is publicly accessible; and,
  - Working with federal agencies during the budget development and submission process in order to make certain that budget priorities reflect the priorities of the National Management Plan.
- ✓ Charges the Office of Management and Budget with developing a crosscut budget of all invasive species efforts in the Federal government.
- ✓ Retains the existing advisory committee of non-governmental stakeholders, which has been serving the Council since its creation.
- ✓ Authorizes \$2 million annually for fiscal years 2004 through 2006 for the Council's activities.